

Book Review

Crosnier, A. and Bouchet, P. (Co-ordinators). 1991. Résultats des Campagnes MUSORSTOM. Volume 7. Mémoires du Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris. Serie A, tome 150, 259 pp. Available from Universal Book Service, Dr. W. Backhuys, Warmonderweg 80, 2341 KZ Oegstgeest, The Netherlands. 350 French francs + 10% postage.

Since 1976 the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle and the French research agency ORSTOM have been conducting joint cruises for scientific research in the Pacific Ocean. Initially the cruises were undertaken in the Philippines but since 1985 they have been done in New Caledonia and the surrounding area. Results of the research have been published in a variety of journals, but principally the "Résultats des Campagnes MUSORSTOM". Relatively little molluscan research was included in the first six volumes of the MUSORSTOM series, but Volume 7 is a major publication which deals entirely with molluscs. The material discussed is all from the New Caledonian cruises, indicating that a major effort was made to sort the samples rapidly after they were collected and send them to experts in the various groups. Station depths range from 250 m to 3690 m, with most samples being from <1000 m. The paper by W. O. Cernohorsky also includes considerable shallow water material.

The volume contains ten individual papers, all systematic and taxonomic, by recognized authorities in the groups being discussed. Eight of the papers are in English and two are in French; all have abstracts in the other language. Of the ten papers one is on chitons, one on bivalves and eight are on gastropods. The nature of the papers differs with the authors and the basic knowledge of the group under investigation. For example, Cernohorsky examines specimens of the family Nassariidae collected during the cruises. Most of the species are already well known, partly through the extensive revisions Cernohorsky has already published on the group. Only a single species is new, but about 30% of the 33 species collected are range extensions. At the other extreme is a major paper by B. A. Marshall on 55 species of the relatively less known family Seguenziidae. Fifty of the species are described as new and a new subfamily recognized. Overall, the volume presents a wealth of information on the systematics of molluscs of the western Pacific. New taxa include one family, one subfamily, five genera and an amazing 89 new species — nearly two-thirds of the total number of species which could be identified. In addition to the species level descriptions several of the papers discuss relationships of groups within a family or transfer genera from one family to another.

The volume has been very well produced, both in the layout and printing. Headings are clear and the print is easy to read. In general, the quality of the photographs used is very high, and Drs. Crosnier and Bouchet are to be congratulated for their effective control of what was clearly a large task. This volume is a major addition to our knowledge of the molluscs of the deeper waters of the western Pacific Ocean and a must for the library of any mollusc worker interested in the marine molluscs of the region.

The groups covered in Volume 7 must constitute only a small portion of the overall molluscan fauna collected. We can anticipate that the MUSORSTOM cruises will result in similar high quality publications on molluscs in future years.